

MERCATOR:

OR,

Commerce Retrieved;

BEING

CONSIDERATIONS on the State of the *British* Trade, &c.

From Saturday, March 27. to Tuesday, March 30. 1714.

An enquiry into those Branches of our Trade in which the French are our Rivals. We ought to ward against the French in their Encroachments on our Trade, but not be terrified at them, as if despairing of preserving our Trade against them.

The Situation of France an effectual Security against their sharing in the Trade to Germany. No Communication by River-Navigation between France and any other Country in the World. The French can Rival us in nothing but in our Woollen Manufactures and our Shipping, and the Treaty of Commerce is qualified to prevent both.

THE MERCATOR is now to examine wherein the French are our Enemies or Rivals in Commerce, and how far they are to be guarded against, and whether are most dangerous to our Commerce, they or the Dutch.

This is a Debate that can very hardly be carried on with so much Impartiality in this Age, but that will be excepted against, because some People think it for their Interest, at this time, to make the French appear as formidable and frightful to us as possible.

The MERCATOR is very willing to have us guarded against every Adversary, especially in our Trade, as well the French as any other, and as well any other as the French. But he cannot see what End it answers, at least what honest End, to make the French a Terror to us.

The Devil is a Monster, but every Monster is not a Devil; nay, even our fear of the Devil, as Divines tell us, ought not to be carried on any farther in the Minds of Men, than to keep them upon their Guard, we should be wary of the Devil, they say, but not afraid.

In like manner, let us ward against the French, but learn not to be afraid. To say the French bid fair to Engross all the Trade of Europe, as it is false in Fact, so it tends to Terrifying and Affrighting us, making our People give their Trade for lost, and not endeavour to preserve and defend it; And the same it is in the Case of our Liberties, in which, it is too true, that some People strive to make us Despair, and look upon Ourselves as lost and undone, rather than prompting us to just Measures for our Preservation.

Such Men, whether in One or Other, are Betrayers of our Country, not Friends and preservers of it.

Our Business is to see our real Danger without falling into any of these extremes, not the extreme of

Security, because it betrays us to Danger, not of Fear, because it betrays us in Danger; Security blinds and dozes the Judgment, and prevents timely Caution; Fear deprives us of the use of those Remedies which Reason offers, and both are pernicious.

The MERCATOR desires to take the middle between these extremes, and neither to be so Secure as not to watch against all Encroachments, learn to know them, and defend against them, and yet not so Frighted as to be amazed, grow helpless, and despair.

No doubt but the French will Rival us in every Branch of our Trade that they are able; Who can blame them? Is not the Wealth and Oppulence of this Nation, which was all raised by Trade, a sufficient Argument to them to take all possible Measures, whether by supplanting us, or any one else, to do the same thing?

Let us then see wherein they can really hurt us? And let us honestly join to guard against it, and not cry out they will Ruine us, and then let a worse Rival do it to prevent the French?

It is most certain, that the Situation of France is such, as that they cannot affect us in the Inland Trade of Europe, as the Dutch can and do; it is impracticable, nay, impossible for us to Trade with any parts of Germany, but by the Interposition of the Dutch; when we speak of the Dutch, we must be allow'd to include the Cities of Hamburg and Bremen, which have Inlets, the one into Westphalia, the other into the Circles of the upper and lower Saxony, by the Elbe and by the Weser.

What the MERCATOR said before is most true; and he insists on it, the French, were they equal to us in Manufactures, could not supply even some parts of their own Country but thro' Holland.

When People answer so Ungeographically, as to say that the French can supply Alsatia by the Navigation



tion of the Seine, or any other River out of France, they can only satisfy us that they know little of the Country, and nothing of the Situation of it; and when People come to look on their Maps, they must necessarily see how they have Imposed upon the World, and consequently believe they have done so in other things; for if they are not ashamed to Impose upon the People in things which are so plain and so easie to be detected, how should it be expected but they will do it in things doubtful, and less easie to be known?

The Situation of France has this peculiar in it, which no Men in the World, but the Opposers of this Affair, can have the face to deny, (viz.) That there is not one Navigable River in the whole Kingdom which goes into or gives Passage and Carriage into any other Country, except, as was formerly Noted, the Rhône and its Branches, by which there are some little Navigations into Savoy and the Country of the Swiss, which really are trifles not worth naming; all the other Rivers, whose Mouths or Influx into the Sea is in France, rise in France also, and can give no Inlet for Commerce into any other parts of Europe.

That from these Rivers they have an Outlet into the Sea, is allowed, and from thence they can extend their Navigation by Sea to all the Marine Countries in the World, is not denied; of which by itself.

But the first part being granted, it follows, that the French cannot have any hand in the Trade to those Inland parts of Europe but as we have, (viz.) Thro' the Interposition of the Dutch and Hamburghers, to whom our Situation makes us much more able to Trade with Advantage than the French; and we have never seen the least Encroachment of the French in that Trade: On the other hand, the Northern parts of their own Dominions are fain to buy not our Manufactures only, but even the Merchandizes and the Produce of their own more Southern Countries of the Dutch.

For example; France, by the Situation of the Port of Marseilles in the Mediterranean, has a large Trade to the Levant, and Imports Raw Silks, Gaus, Fustick, Cotton-Wooll, and several other Goods from Italy and Turkey, with great Advantage; and again in the Bay of Biscay, by their near Neighbourhood to Spain, they have the Spanish Wooll Cheaper than we: For their own Growth, they have Wine, Oil, Olives, Capers, Fruit, &c. even in their own Provinces of Languedoc, Provence, Anjou, Gascoigne, &c. yet all these Goods do the Inhabitants of the North parts of Champaign, the three Bishopricks of Metz, Toul and Verdun, the Countries between the Saar and the Rhine, the Province of Alsacia, &c. buy of the English or Dutch in Holland.

The Reason is plain, (viz.) That by the Rivers Rhine, Saar, Moselle, Maes, Sambre, &c. they have them brought by Water into the Heart of all those Countries from Holland, whereas from France they must be brought many Miles, it might be said of some parts, Hundreds of Miles by Land-Carriage, which in Trade is impracticable.

The like is the Case of the Woollen Manufactures of France? Supposing, for Argument sake, that France

made their Woollen Goods as cheap and as good as ours, which is ridiculous to assert, yet we all know that the Gross of their Woollen Manufacturing is carried on in the Southermost parts of France, as in Languedoc, Gascoigne, Lautoin, Anjou, Poitou, &c. or in Picardy; the Linen Manufactures in Normandy and Bretaign, and the Silk in Lyonois, Auvergne, &c. and about Paris: As to the Woollen Manufactures, if they are to be carried from Picardy or from Anjou or Languedoc into Alsacia, the Bishopricks, or the North of Champaign, by Land-Carriage, including that little Water-Carriage they can get, what Price must they be supposed to bear before they get thither? It must certainly so increase their Value, that either Nobody will buy them, or Nobody will sell them: And this is the Reason why, as has been formerly said, all those Countries are supplied with our Woollen Manufactures rather than their own, and why they buy even the Growth of France it self, by way of Holland.

It is evident by all this, that the French can never Rival us in our Trade with Germany, supposing that they were able to make the Woollen Manufactures as good and as cheap as we do, which it is evident they cannot.

Two Things alone the French are our Rivals in, in Trade, and these are our Woollen Manufactures and our Shipping. How far they are capable of hurting us in these, and what are the Remedies against it, remains to be laid down; in doing which, it will necessarily appear that our present Treaty of Commerce with France is the best, if not the only step for us to prevent them in the first, and will be very useful also to do it in the last.

The *MERCATOR* foresees a vain and empty Cavil which his Opposers will be ready to make, for Cavil is their eminent Grace, or to speak in the Language of Commerce, Cavilling and Quibbling are their principal Manufactures. The Case is this; What! say they, do the French Rival us in nothing but our Woollen Manufactures and Shipping? Do they not Rival us in the Wrought Silks, the Linen, the Paper, and such Manufactures?

The Answer is very direct; They are not our Rivals in those Trades, but we are theirs; We are entered upon their Manufactures of Silks, Linen, Paper, &c. and do really supply Ourselves with large Quantities by our own Labour and Industry, and by the discouraging the Importation of French with high Duties, which high Duties, or the greatest part of them, are still to remain by the Treaty. The French were before us in all these Goods, and we have made Encroachments upon them in them all, and therefore we are properly Rivals to them in those Trades, not they to us; and the *MERCATOR* shall end it with this Remark, (viz.) That take the whole British and French Trades together, and make a just Calculation, it shall at any time appear that England has made greater Encroachments upon the French Manufactures than the French upon the English; and, it is not doubted, but if the Trade comes to be settled, they will still do so; of which more shall be said in the next *MERCATOR*.

